CLAIMS

1. In a video on demand system for supplying requested video data to a plurality of subscriber receivers, the improvement comprising:

a. a first processor which spools said requested video data in response to said request;

b. a video server memory responsively coupled to said first processor in which said spooled requested video data is stored; and

c. a second processor responsively coupled to said video server memory and said subscriber receiver which streams said spooled requested video data from said video server memory to said plurality of subscriber receivers in a plurality of streams spaced apart by a predetermined time.

2. The video on demand system of claim 1 wherein video server said memory further comprises a Unisys CMP memory platform.

3. The video on demand system of claim 2 wherein said second processor further comprises an industry compatible, Windows NT based processor.

4, The video on demand system of claim 3 wherein said first processor further comprises a transaction server responsively coupled to said subscribing receiver and said video server memory.

5. The video on demand system of claim 4 wherein said requested video data further comprises MPEG-2 format.

6. An apparatus comprising:

a. two subscribing television receivers each of which providing a separate spaced apart service request for a video program;

b. A memory having said video program in spooled form corresponding to said service request; and

c. A processor responsively coupled to said memory and said two subscribing cable television receivers which streams said spooled video program to said two subscribing television receivers as a single stream if said separate spaced apart service request are spaced apart by less than a given time period and which streams said spooled video program to said two subscribing television receivers as two streams if said separate spaced apart service requests are spaced apart by greater than a given time period.

7. An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said processor comprises an industry compatible, Windows NT based processor.

8. An apparatus according to claim 7 wherein said memory comprises a Unisys CMP memory platform.

9. An apparatus according to claim 8 wherein said spooled video program further comprises MPEG-2.

10. An apparatus according to claim 9 further comprising a transaction server responsively coupled to said subscribing television receiver and said memory.

11. A video on demand system comprising:

a. First means for requesting a video on demand program at a first time;

b. Second means for requesting said video on demand program at a later second time;

c. Means responsively coupled to said first requesting means for storing said requested video on demand program; and

d. Means responsively coupled to said storing means for streaming said requested video on demand program once if a difference between said second time and said first time is less than a predetermined interval and twice from said storing means if said difference is greater than said predetermined interval.

12. A video on demand system according to claim 11 wherein said first requesting means further comprises a subscriber box.

13. A video on demand system according to claim 12 wherein said streaming means further comprises an industry standard personal computer.

14. A video on demand system according to claim 13 wherein said storing means further comprises a Unisys CMP memory platform.

15. A video on demand system according to claim 14 further comprising a transaction subsystem responsively coupled to said first requesting means and said storing means for spooling said requested video on demand program into said storing means and for managing archival storage of video streams in a hierarchical storage management system that is integrated with the management application and requires no manual intervention.

16. A method of providing video on demand services comprising:

a. Generating a video on demand request from a first subscriber at a first time;

b. Generating a similar video on demand request from a second subscriber at a second later time;

c. Storing a video program corresponding to said video on demand request; [and]

d. Streaming said corresponding video program from said storage to said first subscriber and said second subscriber beginning at a third time if a difference between said second later time and said first time is less than a predetermined interval.

17. A method according to claim 16 further comprising:

a. streaming said corresponding video program to said first subscriber at said third time and second streaming said corresponding video program to said second subscriber at a fourth time if said difference between said second later time and said first time is greater than a predetermined interval.

18. A method according to claim 17 wherein said predetermined interval further comprises one minute.

19. A method according to claim 18 further comprising:

a. Fast forwarding said streaming in response to a fast forward from said first subscriber.

20. A method according to claim 19 wherein said processing step further comprises:

a. Performing subscriber accounting to enable billing said subscriber for said video on demand request.